

THE  
STORY

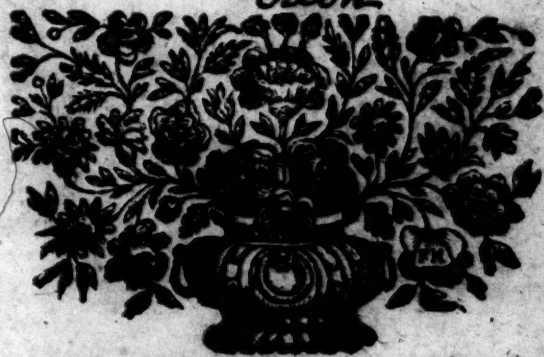
OF

SUSANNA:

A

POEM.

By M<sup>r</sup>. Free of Christ Church  
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THE  
S T O R Y  
O F  
S U S A N N A,  
A  
P O E M.



Ublime Themes ~~de~~ to Epic Strains  
belong;

~~Let~~ an humbler Subject moralize  
my Song.

A studious Ear ye *Britain's* Daughters lend,  
And trace the Pattern which ye must commend.

A 2

When



When Ages since the proud *Assyrian* stood  
 The mighty Monarch of the World subdu'd;  
 Then flourish'd *Babylon*; from ev'ry Soil,  
 Or throng'd with Captives, or enrich'd with Spoil:  
 Then *Sion*, wasted by his destin'd Hand,  
 Was led a Captive to a foreign Land.  
 But the hard Yoak at length the Victor eas'd,  
 And dawning Liberty with Time increas'd:  
 The mournful Captive felt his milder Reign,  
 Shook off the Dust and 'gan to respire again.  
 Intent on Arts her Fate no more she mourns,  
 With Love of Life rich Industry returns.  
 But chief o'er all for Riches, Pow'r and Fame,  
 One stood renown'd, and *Joachim* his Name:  
 Like him to please not one so rightly knew,  
 Not one so honour'd, or so wealthy grew.  
 Some free-born Prince the Captive *Jew* appear'd,  
 So much the Favour of his Lord he shar'd.

When



When lo! yet wanting to his happy State,  
*Chelchiah's* Daughter made his Joys compleat:  
 In the fair *Israelite* at once were join'd,  
 The brightest Person, and devoutest Mind:  
 From her first Years were *Moses' Laws* instill'd,  
 And the good Parents made the pious Child.  
 Thus *Joachim* advanc'd above the rest,  
 Blest in his Fortune, in his Marriage blest,  
 With open Gates his Nation still receiv'd,  
 The Elders honour'd, and the Poor reliev'd.  
 Within his Palace each Debate was heard,  
 And chief the Judges of his Favour shar'd.  
 But what good Act th' ungrateful Wretch can bind,  
 Or what reclaim when Lust enslaves the Mind?  
*Susanna's* Charms (for such his Consort's Name)  
 For holy Friendship rais'd the foulest Flame.  
 As from the Flow'r which gives the Bee its Sweets,  
 Th' invenom'd Spider nought but Poison meets.

Now

Now *Joachim* a spacious House had rear'd,  
 The Owner's Grandeur in the Pile appear'd :  
 Th' adjoining Garden long continu'd Rows  
 Of stately Trees, and lofty Walls enclose.  
 Within the Spot each Fruit that's grateful grew,  
 Each Flow'r delicious to the Smell or View :  
 The mantling Vine its loaded Branches spread,  
 The Olive rear'd its party-colour'd Head.  
 Its hidden Gems unwilling to disclose  
 A sordid Coat the sweet Pomegranate shows.  
 The pale-hu'd Lilies spangled o'er the Ground,  
 And intermingled Roses blush'd around.  
 Delightful Order gave to all a Grace,  
 And Art with Nature vy'd to bless the Place.  
 But tow'rd the midst no more the Flowrets smil'd ;  
 The labour'd Garden ended in a wild.  
 First 'gainst the Sun its Leaf the Fig-tree spreads ;  
 Within, a various Growth exalt their Heads :

Their

Their Shades the Sycomore and Cedar join,  
 The branching Palm-tree and the dusky Pine.  
 But in the Center, where the winding Way  
 Ended at length, a flow'ry Circus lay;  
 Its oval Limits Myrtle-Arbors crown'd,  
 A Marble-Bason grac'd the middle Ground,  
 Three Fonts by subterraneous Ducts supply'd  
 Rise from its Waves, and in its Waves subside:  
 These when to cease some hidden Work commands,  
 Ting'd on the Flood each neighb'ring Object stands.  
 A *Sylvan* Scene's reflected to the Sight,  
 And Trees beneath shut out the nether Light.

Each Noon retiring still *Susanna* went  
 To seek the friendly cool her Garden lent.  
 For then the Season, when the Groves allay  
 With their fresh Shades the scorching of the Day.



Th' attentive Judges ev'ry Motion view,  
 And still in Thought the absent Fair pursue:  
 See her unveil'd beneath some Arbour lie,  
 Courting the Breeze, all charming to the Eye.  
 Fancy improves whate'er Desire conceives,  
 And each warm With a light Enjoyment gives.  
 Thus while each warms, th' inglorious Lust he feels;  
 Conscience in vain their hated Duty tells:  
 Their growing Raptures all Restraint remove;  
 Religion, Friendship, what are ye to Love?  
 But yet, tho' veh'ment, hopeless was their Pain;  
 They saw her daily, but they saw in vain.  
 Both to conceal their lawless Passions try,  
 Shame guards each Word, each Motion of the Eye.  
 Happy had either with his Anguish pin'd,  
 And the foul Flame within himself confin'd:  
 But once as whilst with usual Care they wait  
 The long-wish'd op'ning of the Garden-Gate;

The

The one to cloak the Cause of his Delay,  
 With seeming Wonder chides his Friend away :  
 " Home let's repair since Noon's Repast is near,  
 " Why over-careful do we linger here ?  
 " Our Clients to their Tasks in Peace are gone,  
 " And now the Business of the Day is done. "

This said, they part, and slowly homeward turn,  
 With the same Thoughts their twin-born Passions burn.  
 Secure alone each hopes the Fair to move,  
 And turns obedient to the Calls of Love.  
 Thus when we cease the Needle to controul;  
 It trembles back and seeks th' attracting Pole.

Now divers Ways the House approaching near,  
 Each sudden turns, and meets his Brother there.  
 Silent they stop, and lost in wild Surprise,  
 Betray the Guilt they labour to disguise.

By this embolden'd one his Friend address'd,  
 And thus persuasive to Confession press'd :  
 Since the same Act the same Intention shows,  
 Agree by Friend the Secret to disclose ;  
 Confirm by Words, what Looks so well impart,  
 Forget to blush; and pour out all thy Heart.  
 The pleasing Motion th' other straight obey'd,  
 Threw off the Mask; and thus in Raptures said.

Love in my Soul with wide Dominion reigns,  
 And captivè Vertue droops beneath its Chains.  
 But why with Vertue do I grate thine Ear,  
 Or what avails our usual Varnish here?  
 Alone *Susanna* oft I wish'd to find.

My Thought's the same, the other quick rejoin'd :  
 Hence with united Cunning we'll pursue,  
 Our common Joy, the lovely Prize in View.

What



What tho' a Partner Love refuse to bear;  
 Lust less refin'd allows a Friend to share.  
 But grant alone her Converse we'd enjoy'd;  
 And Eloquence with all its Charms employ'd;  
 Where stern Religion holds its stubborn Reign,  
 Wit is but Folly, Eloquence but vain:  
 Keen-sighted Chastity the Snare defies,  
 And sees the Crime in all its Blackness rise.  
 Far better Means this happy Juncture shows;  
 Oft to her Garden, and alone she goes:  
 There being hid, when we the Fair do spy,  
 Her choice shall be to pleasure us, or die.  
 Then if the Fool relentless still refuse;  
 This specious Fiction shall the Rout abuse;  
 How in unlawful Commerce there we found  
 Some unknown Youth, who leap'd the Garden mound.  
 Our Word decisive bears so strong a Sway,  
 None e'er will question what their Rulers say.

Thus to our Quiet in the fair One's Fall,  
 Our Hopes and Fears alike shall perish all.  
 Her Pray'rs, her Tears, her Charms shall fail to move;  
 'Tis not the Object, but the Crime we love.

With Cunning thus their Stratagem design'd,  
 A Time to execute full soon they find.  
*Susanna* then, for forth her Lord was gone,  
 All but her Servants, deem'd herself alone:  
 These she commands to shut the Garden-Gate,  
 Next at her Fountain with a Lotion wait.  
 Their Mistress' Orders thus perform'd with Care,  
 Back thro' a private Door they straight repair.  
 To the cool Grove *Susanna* goes in haste,  
 And brush'd the lurking Judges as she past.  
 As in the wild some heedless Lambkin strays,  
 And round the Lion's Den unwitting Plays.

The

The Lovers saw, and kindled at the Sight,  
 Impatient rush to snatch the dear Delight :  
 With ardent Gaze devour her promis'd Charms,  
 And round her Bosom clasp their trembling Arms :  
 Redoubled Transport from her Touch receive,  
 And thus in fault'ring Words their Meaning give.  
 Blush not fair Daughter, lay aside thy Fear,  
 In Silence only lend a patient Ear :  
 To bless our faithful long conceal'd Desires,  
 Behold how Fortune now at length conspires :  
 Thou know'st our Pow'r, if rashly thou refuse,  
 Thy Fame tho' spotless dies when we accuse.  
 Thus far she heard. ... 'Tis Death, your Will deny'd,  
 And Death to grant it, with a Shriek she cry'd :

Th' unusual Noise surpriz'd the Servants hear,  
 And thronging at the private Door appear.

With



With ready Lie the old Deceivers waite,  
 This breathless stands beside the open'd Gate;  
 That holds th' Offender and aloud exclaims,  
 Declares her Lewdness, and her Treach'ry blames.  
 The wond'ring Crowd with Pain the Tale believ'd,  
 And all abash'd the swooning Fair receiv'd,

Thus ends the Day; the Morn succeeding rose;  
 To *Joachim's* the full Assembly goes.  
 Early the wakeful Judges haste away,  
 Their own Affair forbids their usual Stay.  
 With Fear of Shame and Thirst of Vengeance fraught,  
 They straight command *Susanna* to be brought.  
 The mournful Matron with her Kin appears,  
 A friendly Train with sympathizing Tears:  
 Her wond'ring Infants on her Garments hung,  
 And her sad Parents slowly led the Throng;

Who

Who all the Firmness of her Vertue knew,  
 But few esteem'd their partial Voices true :  
 A thousand various Ways her Case is told,  
 By the rash Young, or too censorious Old.  
 And now before the Judgment-Seat she stood;  
 When first the Elders thus bespoke the Crowd.  
 The modest Veil from oft the Strumpet tear,  
 From conscious Blushes let her Guilt appear.  
 The Face of Innocence expos'd to View,  
 A Flood of Tears from each Beholder drew.  
 But other Thoughts her curs'd Accusers fire,  
 What gave these Pity, gave to them Desire.  
 Now rising each in awful Judgment stands,  
 Her guiltless Head sustains their impious Hands.  
 Weeping to Heav'n she makes a silent Pray'r,  
 And places all her Hopes of Safety there :  
 Whilst they to prejudice the People sought,  
 And jointly thus their Accusation brought.

As in an Arbour yesterday we lay,  
 To shun the Scorching of the sultry Day;  
 Sudden there open'd wide a privy Gate,  
*Susanna* enters, and her Servants waite.  
 To these some secret Business she pretends,  
 And hasty thence and unsuspecting sends:  
 Soon as she saw her prying Tendance gone,  
 And all exulting thought herself alone;  
 The faithless Wretch, the Darling of her Lord,  
 And, as their Pattern, by her Sex ador'd;  
 Ardent to meet some strange Adult'rer came,  
 Alike forgetful of her Love and Fame;  
 Our Indignation kindled at the View,  
 And quick to seize him both at once we flew.  
 But o'er our Age with Ease the Youth prevail'd,  
 Sprung from our Arms, and quick the Gate assail'd.  
 She still remain'd, yet all in vain we strove,  
 To learn the Object of so base a Love.

• • *Susanna*



*Susanna*, then her Silence meekly broke,  
 A Sigh came struggling with each Word she spoke.  
 Almighty God! Who present ev'ry where,  
 Se'est all the Wickedness transacted here;  
 How ill thy delegates dispense thy pow'r,  
 How unconcern'd the innocent ~~they~~ devour:  
 Let not the wicked thus pervert thy Laws,  
 Rise Judge of all and vindicate my Cause:  
 Purge off the stain of this pretended Guilt,  
 Nor thus unjustly let my Blood be spilt.  
 In vain she spake th' Assembly hasts away,  
 Nor thought it more than Criminals wou'd say.  
 But he, to whom she thus address'd her pray'r,  
 Answer the wishes of th' abandon'd Fair:  
 For now the innocent to death was led,  
 And the vain Hope of Life and respite fled;  
 When midst the Tumult of the gath'ring Crowd,  
 Hark, a glad voice! Which thus proclaims aloud:

" From *Isr'els* Folly I my self am clear,

" The Curse of bloodshed let the Guilty bear,

All look attentive where the Voice was heard ;

When lo ! a Youth of Form divine appear'd ;

Who ardent thus pursu'd the Theme begun :

" On Sins so heinous blindly can ye run ?

" Shall thus a Daughter of our Nation die ?

" The Truth important thus in Darkness lie ?

Shall false Accusers with such Ease deceive,

And their Fair shew so vast Assurance give ?

This said, the People back at once return,

And joyful all with Expectation burn.

Mean while the Elders thus address'd the Youth,

Hail ! Heav'nly chosen advocate for Truth !

Amongst ourselves elected take thy Seat,

And dauntless here the wond'rous Tale repeat.

Then Daniel thus, (for that ~~was~~ his name) reply'd,

From mutual Converse first the two divide ;

Left

Left farther Measures to deceive they take,  
 Our Purpose frustrate and by compact speak.  
 His prudent Counsel is with Care obey'd ;  
 One first advanc'd ; when rising thus he said ;  
 Thou old in Sin, the Guilt so lately done,  
 Shews in what Tenour all thy Days have run.  
 Thus could ye trample on the sacred Law,  
 And slay the Innocent, so void of Awe ;  
 Our injur'd Daughter by your Threats compell,  
 To act the Crime, and acted to conceal ?  
 Now say, (since falsely yet assert ye dare,)  
 Beneath what Tree ye found the guilty Fair.  
 The trembling Sinner stupid with Surprise,  
 Fault'ring, at length, a mastick-tree replies,  
 His Silence then the youthful Elder broke,  
 And sternly thus in comely Anger spoke.  
 Fool, to thy Crimes an End at length is giv'n,  
 Tho' late the Blow of long-forbearing Heav'n.

But



But see the Partner of thy Folly's come,  
 Whose dreaded Answer seals your mutual Doom.  
 Say wicked Judge, beneath what Tree were laid  
 Th' offending Pair? beneath an Holm he said:  
 Then the same sad upbraiding Lesson heard,  
 And the same Sentence with his Brother shar'd.  
 Loud Shouts of Joy on all Sides gather round,  
 And *Daniel's* Praise in ev'ry Mouth is found.  
 Chief the glad Parents in the Joy partake,  
 And *Hallelujah's* to *Jehovah* make:  
 Own injur'd Innocence his special Care,  
 Embrace their Child, and drop a tender Tear.  
 The Death, the Elders for the Fair design'd,  
 Judg'd by the Law themselves deserv'dly find.  
 To Life and Fame *Susanna* thus restor'd,  
 Return'd more lovely to her joyful Lord.

F I N I S.